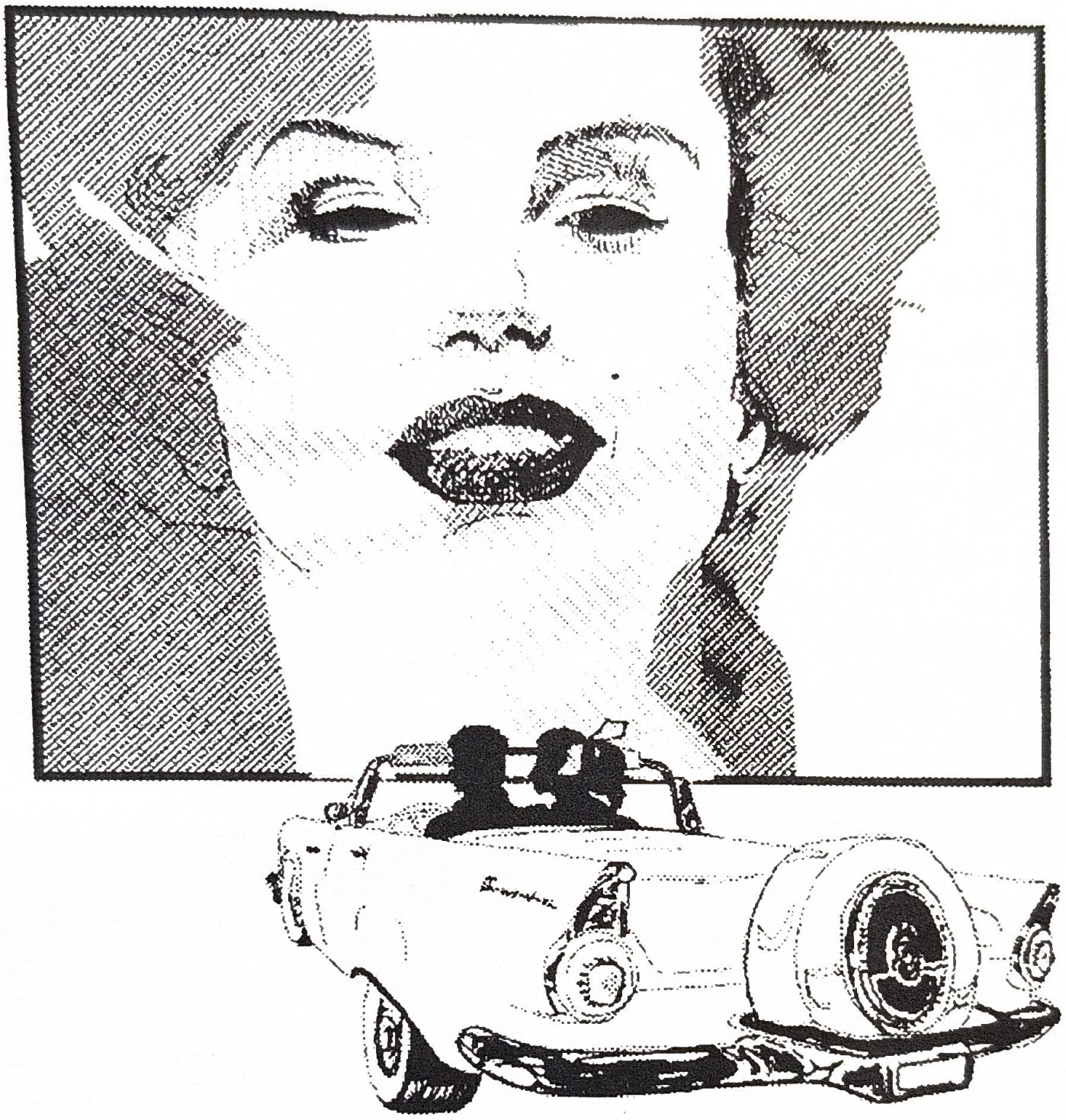
the Columbus Cultural Arts Center presents:

FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN CULTURE



Celebrating the

1950's

August 17 & 18, 1991
Saturday and Sunday
Noon - 5 pm both days
139 West Main Street 614•645•7047

Table of Contents

2 • Introduction

3 • Acknowledgements

5 • Festival Events

6 • Coffee House

7 • Saturday Schedule

9 • Sunday Schedule

11 • Performers

13 • Scholars

15 • Music

17 • Dance

19 • Fine Arts

20 • Design

21 • Fashion

22 • Drama/Literature

23 • Television

25 • Science and Technology

26 • The Bomb

27 • Suburbia

29 • McCarthyism

31 • Sports

32 • Religion

33 • Native Americans

34 • Festival Consultants

The
ARSENAL
G·R·O·U·P

MEET.....

DIANE DOBBINS

THE ARSENAL GROUP CORDIALLY WELCOMES DIANE DOBBINS AS ITS'NEW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR AND SUPPORT GROUP LIASON.

DIANE BRINGS A SOLID COMBINATION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT THAT PREDICTS POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER. HER BACKGROUND REFLECTS OVER TWENTY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN BOTH BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE. DIANE'S PROFESSIONAL TRAINING HAS BEEN BROAD BASED WITH EMPHASIS IN MARKETING, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ACHIEVEMENT.

***BECOME A MEMBER** OF THE ARSENAL GROUP AT THE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER. JOIN OUR SUPPORT GROUP AND WORK WITH OTHER ENTHUSIASTIC MEMBERS WHO WILL BE SUPPORTING THE CENTER THROUGH: • ARSENAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM • FUNDRAISING/SPECIAL EVENTS • VOLUNTEER SOLICITATION • ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY AWARENESS • DONOR/SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS.*

***VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:** IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A FUN, ARTISTIC PLACE TO VOLUNTEER, COME TALK TO US ABOUT CREATIVE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES. CALL DIANE DOBBINS AT 645-7506.*

Introduction

The Cultural Arts Center welcomes you to the Festival of American Culture: Celebrating the 50's.

During the next two days we invite you to remember, reflect, learn, observe, sing and dance the decade of the fifties. The experiences we are presenting will not only re-create a great era of American culture for your entertainment and edification, but as you leave here you may be able to make much more sophisticated connections, look at, listen to and watch the arts of the 50's with greater appreciation.

Things from the fifties have become suddenly quite interesting to us today, not because baby boomers are nostalgic, but because, as eras end, it is natural to look back at their origins and think about some of the roads not taken. As the postwar era ends its nearly 45 year run, it is time for us to look again at Eames chairs, Abstract Expressionism, Rock-n-Roll, Civil Rights, and more.

Our scholars will help interpret the signifigance of the 1950's as a decade that exemplifies the American spirit in both the arts and the sciences. As you are walking through the festival, please feel free to talk with the scholars and performers. They'll be happy to answer your questions and let you know why they are so excited about the fifties.

America in the 50's was at the height of the mass manufacturing prowess, with a million companies small and large seizing new materials and processes to satisfy the demands of the American public. Nearly everyone, except the very poor, could find crockery, cutlery, ornaments, kitchen and bathroom accessories - you name it - you could have it at a price you could afford. Democratic America!

But there was a darker side to this seemingly perpetual prosperity. Since the end of the forties, the Communists were posing a serious threat to world peace. They had the atomic bomb and we had found spies in our midst. In the early decade we developed the hydrogen bomb which could destroy the civilized world in minutes. Cold war, McCarthyism, mass denial and a non-critical conservative consensus clouded our perspective. Everyone, except the intellectuals, liked Ike and dedicated themselves to the bourgeois goals of security, sociability, domesticity and conformity.

By the late fifties, the Soviets had won the first round of the space race with Sputnik I, racism was being challenged, the economy had hit a major recession and we entered a time of national reassessment.

As you tour the exhibition, you will readily notice these extremes of culture from the sublime to the ridiculous. We encourage you to stop and talk to the scholars and performers who are ready and eager to converse with you about the 1950's and to share their knowledge and enthusiasm about this decade.

We are delighted to have you with us. Enjoy!

Acknowledgements

Columbus Cultural Arts Center Staff

Dr. Georgia Tangi, Dr. Ellen O'Shaughnessy
Festival Coordinators and Booklet Editors

Jennifer Johnson
Cultural Arts Center Director

Debbie Keri-Brown
Public Relations/Marketing Coordinator

Cynthia Deis
Program Assistant

Cynthia Gatewood
Administrative Manager

Festival Consultant • Dr. Tim Scheurer
Cover Artist • Dr. Georgia Tangi
Festival Booklet Design • Cynthia Deis
Sound Technician • Charlie Schafer
Emcee • Dr. Bob Padberg

The Festival of American Culture: Celebrating the 50's has been sponsored by the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department's Cultural Arts Center, the Ohio Humanities Council, the Ohio Arts Council and the Walter and Marian English Foundation.

Columbus
Recreation & Parks
Department

Funded Through
Ohio Arts Council
727 East Main Street
Columbus, Ohio 43205-1796
(614) 466-2613

OHIO
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL

The Cultural Arts Center wishes to thank the following festival supporters:

Dr. Timothy Scheurer
Keny Galleries
Richard Aschenbrand, exhibit designer
Robert Peatross, exhibit contributor
Seek-n-Save Vintage Consignment Shoppe
Petro Annie's
Franklin University
Continental Office Furniture and Supply Corporation
Grandmother's Video Production
Don M. Casto Organization
Mid-Ohio Historical Museum
Allen County Historical Society
Ken's Pacemont Salon
Glick's Furniture Company
Suzanne Grey, 1950's wall designer
Larson's Toys and Games
M.S. Smith Automotive
The Proctor and Gamble Company
McDonald's
7-11 Stores
The Phillip Sills Collection, The OSU Cartoon, Graphic and Photographic Arts Research Library
Otie's Old Hilliard Inn & Pub
Music in the Air
The Arsenal Group Volunteers

Franklin UNIVERSITY

SEEK n SAVE Consignment Shoppe

GRANDMOTHER'S VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

PETRO-ANNIE'S Trackside Nostalgia

Festival Events

EXHIBITS

Collections of artifacts including furniture, fashions, design products, TV's, children's culture, music and movie memorobilia and more! The visual arts exhibit, curated and installed by Keny Galleries, will include a representation of action painting, regional works and outsider art. Many of these works are the finest examples from prestigious local collections.

DISCUSSIONS

Humanities and art scholars will present a peppering of related lectures throughout the festival weekend. Attend for some very refreshing information, facts and viewpoints.

COFFEE HOUSE SCENE (ON THIRD FLOOR)

Go back to the era of the beat poet, protest music, and cool jazz. Sip some java and discuss civil rights, cultural diversity and women's issues.

FILMS

Four popular films of the decade will be presented and discussed as examples of 50's film genres.

FUN FILM SNIPPETTS

Grab a seat and laugh to clips of many of the funniest of 50's TV bloopers, commercials and out takes, training films and cartoon shorts.

CLASSIC CARS

Who could forget tail fins? Check out the classic car exhibit in the Center's courtyard and watch the chrome shine!

FUNDRAISING BASH

A ticketed Saturday night event sponsored by the Center's support group, The Arsenal Group. Join us for dancing and music, and come in 50's attire for even more fun while you're jitterbugging the night away. Ask for more information at the front desk.

BEATNIKS, BOYCOTTS AND BLUES
(THE COFFEEHOUSE ON 3)

Many of the sociopolitical events and ideas that moved America on into the more progressive, reactionary decade of the 1960's have their roots in the '50s. Join us in our recreated coffeehouse on the third floor as we entertain and educate you about these important "underground" events.

The civil rights movement cannot be understood without knowing that in 1954, the Supreme Court ruled separate (segregated) educational facilities inherently unequal, thus unconstitutional.

"In Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955, an act of quiet courage reshaped the career of Martin Luther King Jr., a scholarly young preacher recently installed in his first church. That day a weary Negro seamstress defied the local law and refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. The woman's arrest was the last straw for Montgomery's Negro community; their leaders, including Dr. King, met to organize a one-day bus boycott.

On December 5, fully 90 per cent of the Negro populace walked or hitchhiked, but white authorities refused to budge and the Negroes' mild demands escalated into an all-out campaign for desegregated public transportation. King and his co-organizers set up a 200-car motor pool and underwrote the cost of their jitneys by raising about $225,000 in donations. And the Negroes honored King's pleas for nonviolence, despite arrests and harassments, capped by the bombing of King's home on January 30, 1956.

The boycott was almost a year old when, on November 13, 1956, the Supreme Court declared bus segregation illegal in Alabama. But despite this step on the road to equality, King's followers remembered his call for even greater effort: "If I am stopped, this movement will not stop, because God is with the movement."

Then, in September of 1957, President Eisenhower responded to the militant blocking of nine black students at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas by sending one thousand army paratroopers to insure their safety.

By 1958, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others had formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and ten thousand black and white students converged on Washington in a "Youth March For Integrated Schools."

The coffeehouse will offer our festival participants an opportunity to experience the roots of human rights activism through performances of folk-protest music, the "cool" jazz of Charlie "Byrd" Parker, Gwendolyn Brooks poetry, beatnik manifestos, and presentations by scholars on minority and feminist art of the decade as well as a visit to Long Street and Mount Vernon Avenues in the 1950's when jazz was in its heyday in Columbus.

exerpted from This Fabulous Century, *vol VI, Time Life Books, 1970*

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MAIN HALL

1:00-1:20•**A Raisin in the Sun** •Dramatic portrayal of suburbia's resistence to deviation from the status quo. This play, by **Lorraine Hansberry**, tells the story of the impact of a black family's move into a predominately white neighborhood. Excerpts performed by the **Center Stage Theatre** of Columbus, under the artistic direction of **Jeannine L. Sessoms** and Stage Manager **Susan Humphrey.**

1:50-2:30•**Pam Scheurer** and **Thom Gall** will sing selections from Broadway and hit tunes of the '50's.

2:50-3:10•**Gene Walker**, instrumentalist, will present jazz music of the '50's with songs by Art Blakey, Horace Silver, Clifford Brown, Max Roach, and Sonny Rollins.

3:20-4:00•**Dances of the 1950's**• **Kellie Lajiness** will perform to fifties hit tunes with Mark Beers, Jocelyn Calaycay, Allen Desterhaft, and Gina Schmidt. They"ll cut the rug to the favorites-"Mr. Sandman," "Come-On-A-My-House," "Heartbreak Hotel," "You Send Me," and "Rock Around the Clock."

4:30-5:15•**Sugar and Spice and the Studebakers**• Come rock with your favorite fifties tunes performed live!

COFFEE HOUSE

1:30-2:00•**Dr. James Upton**, scholar in residence of the Coffee House, presents **Larry W. Myers** dramatizing the poetry of the "Mystical Bohemians" of the 50's, **Ginsberg**, **Ferlinghetti** and **Corso**.

2:00-2:30•**Chris Montgomery** will sing folk and protest music of the 50's with guitar and harmonica.

2:30-2:50•**Lydia Thompson** will sing folk numbers from the 50's, she will be accompanied by **Chris Montgomery** on the guitar for selected songs.

2:50-3:15•**Dr. Valerie Lee** will present the poetry of **Gwendolyn Brooks** and connect her reflections with the cultural themes of the 50's.

3:15-3:30•**Dr. James Upton** will discuss **Civil Rights Activism** and offer to register visitors for nonviolent protests reminiscent of the 50's.

3:30-4:30•**Gene Walker**, instrumentalist, will present the jazz music of the 50's.

COURTYARD

2:00-2:30•Hula-Hoop contest•

2:30-3:00•YoYo contest•

Continuous•**Flyin' Saucers**• an authentic 50's rockabilly band. Performed by **Johnny Rebel**, **Jeff German**, **Dan SaGraves**, and **Rex Xanders**.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 1991

LOWER LEVEL

1:00-3:00•Broken Arrow•a 1950 film release stars **Jimmy Stewart** as an ex-Union officer who befriends the Apache princess (Debra Paget) and attempts to lead Cochise (Jeff Chandler) to peace. **Dr. Jack Nachbar**, film scholar.

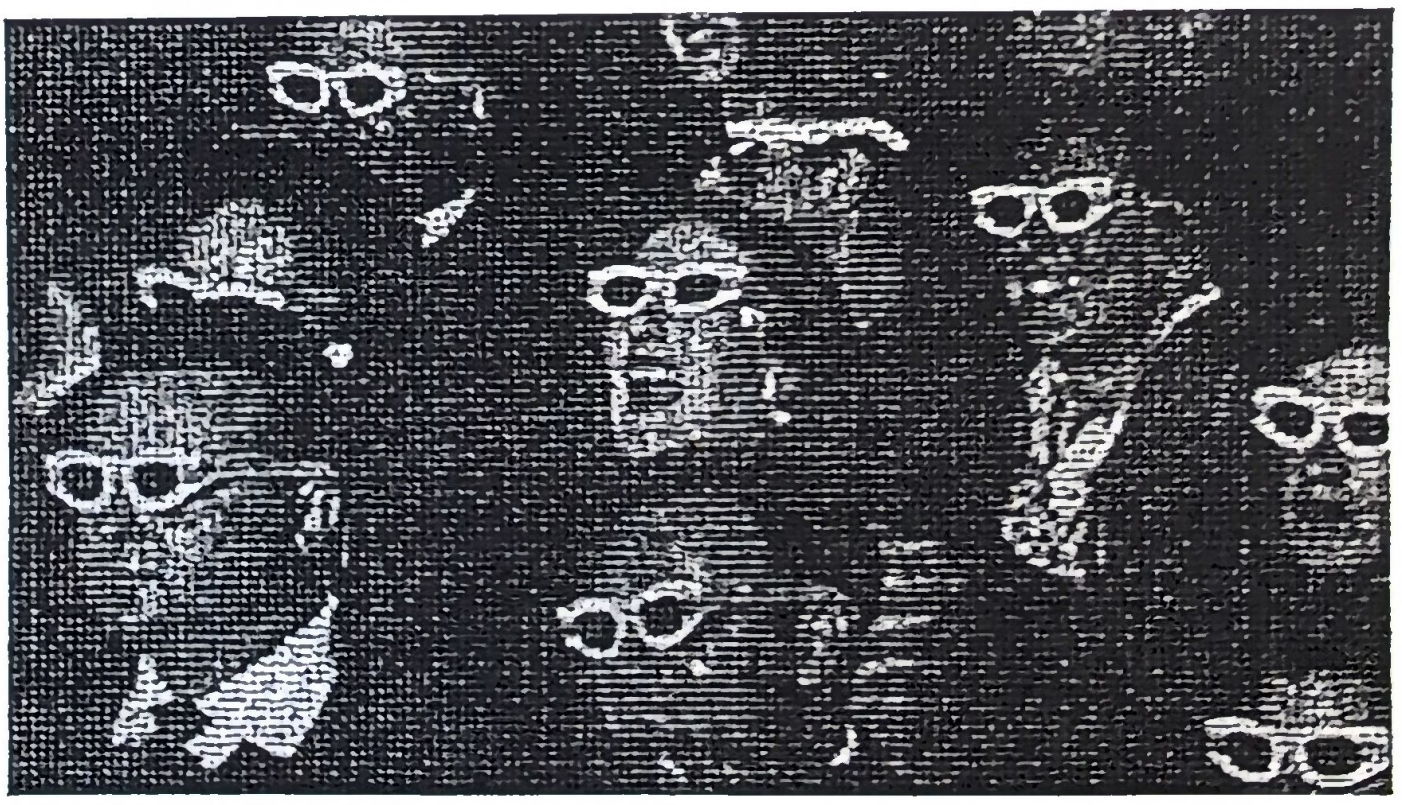
1:20-1:50•**Hollywood Actresses of the '50's•Dr. Judith Mayne** will discuss women's roles in '50's films, looking at the contrast between the 'sex goddess' and the 'girl next door.' Film clips of **Marilyn Monroe** and **Doris Day** will be shown.

2:00-2:30•**American Architecture of the 1950's:Where It Came From and Where It Went•Nancie Recchie** and **Jeffrey Darbee** will look at the influences affecting architectural design in the post-WWII era.

2:30-2:50•**The Development of Television Programming in the 50's•** Using slides and videotape clips, **Dr. Michael Marsden** will discuss how 50's TV programming set the pattern for the programs we watch today.

3:00-5:00•**Creature from the Black Lagoon•** A classic in 3-D. Horror emerges as the gill man comes to life when a team of scientists sends him on a rampage. The film stars **Richard Carlson** and **Richard Denning**, with a confused **Julia Adams** playing the love interest for both Carlson and the creature. **Dr. Jack Nachbar**, film scholar.

4:00-4:30•**American Moderns•Dr. Georgia Tangi** and **Mary Maiorano** examine and compare the works of Abstract Expressionists Jackson Pollack, Willem de Kooning and others with the reactionary roots of Pop masters Lichtenstein and Warhol.



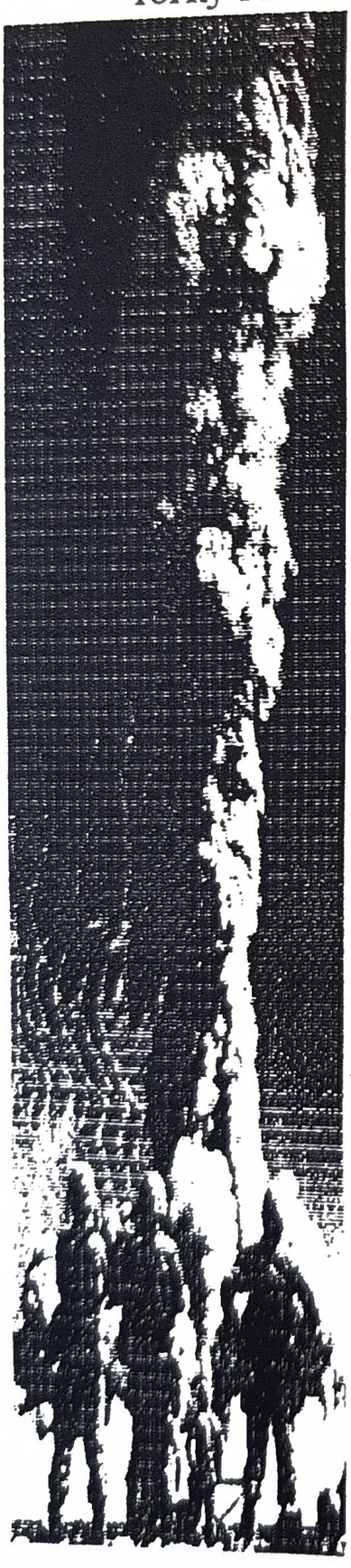
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MAIN HALL

12:30-12:50•Chris Montgomery will sing and perform folk and protest music of the '50's with guitar and harmonica.

1:00-1:20•Lydia Thompson will sing the songs of **Patsy Cline.**

1:30-1:50•Willie Pooch, lead vocalist, will perform '50's blues hits by Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter and B.B. King. Accompanying musicians are David Freelander, Yorky Proctor, David Lyon, John Horsefield and Bernie.



2:00-2:20•Jamie Coyne, an **Elvis** stylist, will perform "Don't Be Cruel," "All Shook Up," "Heartbreak Hotel," "Hounddog," and "Blue Suede Shoes," as we remember fourteen years since the death of Elvis (August 16.)

2:30-3:30•The Sock Hop Jitterbug Club dance and workshop- the swing-style dances of the '50's, bring your socks to join in the fun.

4:00-5:00•1950's Fashion Show• Look for the glorious fashions of the 50's to be modeled in a runway presentation. The show commentator is **Nora E.Jones**, Vintage garmets provided by **Mary Ann Kimbro** of **Seek-N-Save Consignment Shoppe.**

COFFEE HOUSE-3RD FLOOR

1:00-1:30•Jazz at Its Peak in Columbus•Arnett Howard, Jazz Historian.

2:00-3:00•Gene Walker, instrumentalist, will present the jazz music of the 50's.

3:00-3:15•Goodby Brooks-Poet Laureate•Valerie Lee will present the arts of one of America's greatest poets.

3:15-3:35•Cultural Diversity in The Visual Arts•Dr. Georgia Tangi and **Mary Maiorano** will present a slide discussion of works by women and African American's of the 50's.

3:35-3:55•Chris Montgomery will sing folk and protest music of the 50's with guitar and harmonica.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 1991

3:55-4:15•**Lydia Thompson** will sing folk numbers from the 50's.

COURTYARD

2:00-2:30•Hula-Hoop contest•

2:30-3:00•YoYo contest•

3:30-4:00•**Elvis Presley** and **Marilyn Monroe** look-alike contests•

Continuous•**Flyin' Saucers**• an authentic 50's rockabilly band. Performed by **Johnny Rebel**, **Jeff German**, **Dan SaGraves**, and **Rex Xanders**.

Lower Level

1:00-1:20•**Science Fiction/Philosophy**•**Fred Miller** presents a discussion of the impact of technological advances such as nuclear testing ufo sightings, and the space race on the philosophy of the decade.

1:00-3:00•**Rebel Without A Cause**•**Dr. Jack Nachbar** will present this star-maker for **James Dean** in its entirety.

1:30-1:50•**Children's Culture of the 1950's**•**Dr. Jack Nachbar** will discuss children's issues of the 50's.

2:00-2:30•**The Dolls of the Fabulous Fifties**•**Henrietta Pfeifer**, Executive Director of the Mid-Ohio Historical Museum will discuss the many dolls of the 50's.

3:00-5:00•**It Came From Outer Space**•**Dr. Jack Nachbar** will present this science fiction shocker in 3-D.

3:30-4:00•**From Rhythm and Blues to Rock**•**Dr. Tim Scheurer** discusses 50's music.

PERFORMERS

Center Stage is a non profit theater company celebrating its tenth anniversary this year under the leadership of Executive Director, Jeannine L. Sessoms. The cast for *Raisin in the Sun* is made up of Adeline Brown, Ron Pitts, Peggy Parks, Lynette Cashaw, Donald Eugene Hutchinson III, Scott Porter, J. Spencer Miller with Stage Manager, Susan Humphrey.

Jamie Coyne is an Elvis stylist from Bexley who has performed for many occasions. On December 13, 1991, he will perform at Veterans Memorial with the Jordanaires, a Backup Vocal Group with Elvis Presley for many years. The 14th anniversary of Elvis' Death is August 16.

Flyin' Saucers is an authentic Rockabilly Show with Johnny Rebel, lead singer and guitar player; Jeff German, lead guitar and vocalist; Dan SaGraves, upright bass; and Rex Xanders, drummer.

Thom Gall is a singer and actor known to many through the Columbus Light Opera and Cantari Singers. He has performed programs with Dennis James, world renowned organist, at the Ohio Theater.

John Gilmore is an African American Poet, and Viet Nam veteran who has written and exclusively published poetry on the last twenty years which reflects his life experience.

Kellie Lajiness received her B.F.A. in Dance from Western Michigan University and her Masters in Dance from OSU. A gifted dancer, Lajiness has worked with the Young Americans in the America Music Theater. She is currently an instructor at Dance Plus and a competive ballroom dancer. Her choreography has been seen in Iowa, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

Dr. Valerie Lee is Professor of English at Dennison University and has published a work on Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Lee is currently working on *Midwives, Root Workers, Root Workers and Folk Healers: Narrative Strategies in Black Women's Fiction.*

Chris Montgomery from Bellbrook, Ohio has sung and performed in Coffee Houses in the late '60s and studied under Blue grass music legend Red Allen.

Larry W. Myers is a performance artist, dancer and poet. Myers has performed several one person shows which incorporate visual, literary and movement expressions.

Willie Pooch is lead vocalist with the Willie Pooch Blues Band. Other members of the Band include David Freelandes, Yorky Procter, David Lyon, John Horsefield and Bernie.

Sock Hop Club is under the leadership of Bill and Susie Wolcott and made up of 150 members who meet monthly to dance the steps of the '50s-the Jitterbug, Swing, Chacha, Hula Hoops, Line Stroll, and the Limbo.

Pam Scheurer has sung professionally in Columbus for the past thirteen years including performances of popular music, as well as singing in Opera Columbus' Opera-in-the Schools program. She received her Master's degree in Education from OSU.

Sugar and Spice and the Studebakers is an "oldies" band of the '50s accompaning a group of singers and dancers to the tunes of the '50s. The group has performed for many occasions including the State Fair.

Lydia Thompson, Folk singer, has a B.A. from OSU and studied five years of voice with local teachers including Michele Horsefield and Kathy Jo Cook. Thompson has performed for weddings, local civic associations, churches, nursing homes, restaurants and the Worthington Community Chorus.

Gene Walker, an instrumentalist, is a leader of the jazz group Gene Walker's Generations. He has performed in major clubs and festivals around the country such as Carnegie Hall and Harlem Culture Festival in New York, as well as during a tour with the Beatles. Walker has just completed a world tour to Italy, England and Holland as a jazz saxaphonist. He teaches on the faculty of OSU.

Scholars

Richard Ashenbrand • Professor of Design, Columbus College of Art and Design and Curator of the Ohio State Fair Fine Arts Exhibit.

Jeffrey T. Darbee • Vice President and Preservation Specialist for the Benjamin D. Rickey & Company. Jeff began his historic preservation career over 16 years ago.

Arnette Howard • Author of Listen for the Jazz, a history of local jazz artists and music, published in 1990, and leader of the Creole Funk Band.

Nora E. Jones • Attorney and Partner in the law firm of Schottenstein, Zox and Dunn, she was the first woman to receive a B.A. in women's studies from Oberlin College. Nora is a collector of vintage clothing and jewelry.

Mary Ann Kimbro • The owner of Seek-n-Save Vintage Consignment Shoppe in Clintonville, which specializes in clothing and accessories from the 1920's-1960's.

Dr. Michael Marsden • Professor of Popular Culture and Associate Dean of the College of the Arts and Sciences of Bowling Green State University.

Dr. Judith Mayne•Professor of French and Women's Studies at OSU, is the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanitites, the Ohio Arts Council and others.

Dr. Fred Miller • Director of the Center of Social Philosophy and Policy and Professor of Philosophy at Bowling Green State University.

Dr. Jack Nachbar • Professor of Popular Culture specializing in film studies, Bowling Green University. He has also edited several books on poplular culture.

Dr. Ellen O'Shaughnessy • Executive Director of the Downtowners, Program Coordinator with the Columbus Cultural Arts Center, and Adjunct Professor at Franklin University.

Henrietta Pfiefer • Executive Director of the Mid-Ohio Historical Museum, Canal Winchester, Ohio.

Rick Prelinger • of Prelinger Archives in New York, New York, is a media archeologist.

Nancy Recchie • President and Head of Project Management for Benjamin D. Rickey & Company. Nancy has 15 years experience with historic preservation.

Dr. James Upton•received his Ph.D. from OSU in Political Science. He is an Associate Professor of Black Studies teaching a variety of related courses at OSU.

Rock - n - Roll

By 1950, the proliferation of television forced radio into more music programming. Stations were competing for various markets. Musical tastes often indicated their social class. The high brow was listening to the new compositions of Gian Carlo Menotti and Aaron Copland while still giving respect to Leonard Bernstein, the elegant popularizer of symphonic sound.The Broadway musical was still very popular with educated consumers and provided the marketplace with hit songs from such memorable shows as My Fair Lady by Lerner and Loewe, West Side Story by Bernstein and Sondheim and The King and I, Flower Drum Song, and The Sound of Music, by Rodgers and Hammerstein.

Jazz, with its dedicated entourage of liberal white intellectuals and educated blacks moved from bop to cool. Among the leaders of the new revolution were Miles Davis, saxophonists Lester Young, Stan Getz, and Gerry Mulligan, the group The Modern Jazz Quartet, and pianist Lennie Tristano . Gil Evans' and Stan Kenton's cerebral orchestrations put a new twist on the role of the big band in jazz. Dave Bruebeck's infectious rhythms on his best selling album Take Five helped "cool" reach out into a broader marketplace.

The presumed less sophisticated tastes leaned towards country and popular hit tunes. Patsy Cline, Tennessee "Ernie" Ford, Rosemary Clooney, Frank Sinatra and Patti Page were pop station favorites. The early fifties produced novelty hits, albums consisting purely of sound effects, and clean cut folk tunes such as the Weaver's' "On Top of Old Smokey" (1954). Calypso and Latin music enjoyed mass dance audiences, boosted by the music of Harry Belefonte.

Sometime in 1951, a disc jockey from Salem, Ohio, named Alan Freed saw several white youths in downtown Cleveland dancing to and buying rhythm and blues records. He went to his station manager and proposed a program to be called "Moondog's Rock-n-Roll Party." Freed renamed the "race records" "rock-n-roll" a getto slang term meaning both dancing and sex. Thus today we claim Ohio as the birthplace of this American pop music genre.Alan Freed did much more than introduce white audiences to black music. He consistently gave black performers preference and refused to play the "whitewashed" covers of their hits. In order for for rock-n-roll to triumph, however, it had to crossover from the "race" charts. In 1954, "Sh-Boom" by the Chords crossed over from the R&B to the Pop charts, however, it was the all white Crew Cuts cover version that reached the year's top ten list. Bill Haley and the Comets, and ex-country group covered "Shake, Rattle and Roll," a tune originally written by

Charles Calhoun and sung by black artist Joe Turner. Haley revised the words; "you wear low dresses/the sun comes shinin' through" to say "you wear those dresses/your hair done up so nice." What happened in these cover mixes was more than censored lyrics by white vocalists. It was the blending in of country and R&B sounds to make the music more acceptable to a growing popular audience. In 1955, the Haley version of "Rock Around the Clock" rocketed to fame and forever linked rock-n-roll to rebellion in the movie Blackboard Jungle, which portrayed the music as an integral part of the juvenile delinquent's attitude. It was now clear that whatever else this new music was, its primary appeal was to the young and the restless.

The stage was set for Elvis, a tough, confident sensual white country boy who loved God, his Moma, his capitalist excesses and was even willing to join the army with a patriotic smile. He might look delinquent, but he had a self effacing personality and he could sing! He was signed by RCA late in 1955 and immediately scaled the charts in pop, country and R&B. Even Sinatra, a decade earlier, had not achieved such a coup!

Rock-n-Roll functioned for the young and the alienated in the way the blues and country western music had, as a means of expressing the hard facts of life in America. Moving from inner expression and singing about troubles had made it possible for people to both affirm the existence of the problem and maintain an optimism while living with it. Elvis, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard and Fats Domino transformed the frustrations of a generation into a sound that liberated their spirits. Why else would adults, the Catholic church, and even Look magazine refer to Presley and rock as "mostly nightmare" and a threat to moral decency?

Rock brought a generation together, giving the newly named 'teen-agers' an identity. It was the reaction elicited from adults and the establishment that made rock and roll more than music. In 1957 when a new television show brought rock-n-roll into every American home with the boy-next-door host Dick Clark to domesticate the music, parental fears were soothed. American Bandstand exploited wholesomeness, enforced a strict dress code and emphasized a nice, white, middle-class, propriety that we could dance to.

Elvis joined the Army, Little Richard joined the church, and as the decade ended Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper and Richie Valens were killed together in a plane crash that seemed like an omen. Rock and roll did not die, but it was wounded.
By the end of the decade the best minds of that generation had taken up folk-protest music and cool jazz for the segue into the sixties.

Dance

What can be said about dance in its relationship to the American culture during the 1950's? A decade of production and luxury, the American public was introduced to television and the portable radio. Going out to ballroom dance in the traditional sense had become frustrating since the big bands of the Swing Era were almost obsolete. The smaller jazz combos that began playing in the ballrooms were more for listening pleasure-dance sets played in the cool style were sometimes 30 minutes long. Dancers began to avoid the ballrooms altogether, television lured many into staying home to watch their favorite program, such as those by Arthur and Katherine Murray. Those who wanted to pursue their ballroom dancing went to ballroom dance studios to learn and progress as they do today.

The Cuban social dance known as the cha cha (a development from the already popular mambo) was introduced in the U.S. in 1954. Latin music such as that of Perez Prado began its fusion in America with the aid of tourism in the late '40's. Predo's music hit "Cherry Pink and Apple blossom White," inspired the cha cha craze with people flocking ballroom studios to learn it. To this day cha cha is the most popular latin dance in America. In 1957 a calypso dance craze appeared with the help of music chart hits by Harry Belafonte. Calypso dancing and music hd its roots from the British Colonies of the West Indies.

Through out the '50s one can continually find the dance known to most as the jitterbug. This dance which stems from the lindy hop of the lae '20s into the swing/jitterbug of the '30s and '40s was featured on the American Bandstand program as Bop, when rock-n-roll entered the scene in 1955. This new sound which found its way into the hearts of the American teenager came to us through the roots of rhythm and blues, gospel, folk, and country. Teenagers in their enthusiasm were either bopping or clinging to each other as they swayed to slow love ballads written only for them. They danced next to a

juke box, their own record players, or in the high school gym where they also did line dances like the stroll and bunnyhop. Other fun dance fads came and went such as the slop, the crawl, and the madison. The twist had just briefly been introduced by the late '50s.

Among the tunes that hit the charts were often those from the famous musicals of the day. Musical theatre was becoming a great catalyst for dance in the 1950's. It was then that dance began to help support and carry the plot and aided characterization. It is important to note that many modern, ballet and jazz choreographersfound forum through musical theatre stage and the ever growing movie musical industry. Jerome Robbins successfully used the modern jazz idiom within the late '40s-tensions among teenagers in the 1957 musical West Side Story. In the film industry other ntable fusions of dance and drama bring to mind Gene Kelly's Oscar winning choreography for *"An American In Paris"* (1951), and Michael Kidd's choreography for *"Seven Brides For Seven Brothers"*

The influential name among jazz dancers in the '50s was Matt Mattox. Modern dance choreographers were experimenting with the body in its relationship to its horizontal capabilities. In the classic school of ballet the noble and majestic strength of the vertical body was continually called upon to exemplify harmonious and graceful motion. Within the music industry itself, musicians and vocalists gave way to stylistic movement that made them popular such as Elvis Presley's pelvic and leg gyrations, Chuck Berry's guitar strumming antics, and the Bill Haley and the Comets rocking level changes as they danced with instrument in hand.

In the 50's dance choreographers and performers embraced the social scene and environment, capturing the spirit of human relationships and emotion through the expressiveness of the body in motion. Whether they were jitterbugging at a concert, strolling through a sock hop, cha-cha-ing in their living room, or dancing across the silver screen, American's danced through the 50's!

Fine Arts

The visual arts in the 1950's were characterized by experimentation, action and reaction. Many American artists, reacting against the atmosphere of McCarthyism, the Cold War threat and mass cultural denial, looked inward for their inspiration and ideas. Freudian theories which had motivated Surrealism, and the Existential philosophies which had supplied content for the earlier European Expressionists were reexamined. Many expatriates fleeing WWII were teaching art, architecture and design in American universities. This had a profound influence on the new generation of American abstract painters, who identified with their disillusioned European mentors. These factors, combined with a compulsion to express raw emotion in art, created the first purely American art form which quickly spread into an "international" style.

The most notorious rebel painter of the 1950's was Jackson Pollack, credited with inventing "action painting." He laid his canvases on the floor and danced, dripped or threw paint onto it. Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Gotleib and Kline further developed the Abstract Expressionist idiom. Though they did not receive adequate appreciation during this male-dominated period, many women such as Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, and Helen Frankenthaler were creating innovative and important paintings in the 50's.

The "New York School" as the above artists were called, was not the only game in town. Many independent artists such as Jacob Lawrence, Thomas Hart Benton, Georgia O'Keefe, and Edward Hopper were portraying more traditional subject matter in personal and expressive styles.

By the end of the decade, reactions to the dominance of Abstract Expressionism created a profoundly new look in American art. Called "Pop Art," it is usually associated with the sixties when it moved into the mainstream. However, Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol and Jasper Johns were actively portraying images of America which they derived from popular and commercial culture in the late 50's. Roy Lichtenstein, creator of the controversial Columbus landmark, Brushstrokes in Flight, taught painting at OSU from 1957-61. By the time his "comic book" images were appreciated, the university had fired him!

The paintings in our exhibition represent American art as it was seen and practiced by local artists at mid-century. There are representative works from the regionalist style of Emerson Burkhart to the modern abstractions of Kuehn and Wynne. These paintings are on loan from Keny Galleries.

Design

The 1950's produced some of the finest designed furniture and home and office accessories ever to be offered to the American consumer. The best items were designed by architects who turned their attentions to furniture when the WWII austerity programs forbade the constructions of new buildings. Charles Eames, George Nelson, Eero Saarinen, and Arne Jacobsen designed functional, practical and simple furniture that still looks "modern" after forty years. It was called modern then, and was perfectly suited for the prefab suburban tract home with its scaled down interior and the growing number of new office complexes of the affluent economy. It was comfortable, child proof, and easily transported from starter apartment to homes in suburbia as the baby-boomers grew. It came in all price brackets, was affordable enough for the corporate grey flanneled set whose marshmallow sofa became a conversation piece at frequent cocktail parties.

The period between 1945 and 1960 saw an unprecedented growth in the furniture industry. From the top designers whose vision changed not only the way things looked but forever influenced how we would look at them, to the new materials and technologies which were the by-products of the war, to the eager and emerging consumer, America by design was an emerging force.

Smart department stores of the period promoted furniture more vigorously than fashion. Even the five and dime offered mass produced copies of such modern furniture as the wrought iron chair slung with canvas. The Sling, Butterfly or Hardoy Chair was knocked off to the tune of five million copies and can still be found for sale at a nominal price in catalogs.

In spite of all this excellence of design, the decade of the fifties is perhaps most remembered for its characteristic bad taste. Flamingo decals, leopardskin prints and the amusing vulgarity of cuteness in pairs. The groundbreaking designs were bastardized by waves of the uninspired and hideous. We remember the cheap knock offs, the chunky vinyl slab sofa, the boomerang and kidney shaped blonde wood cocktail tables holding plastic bird of paradise plants, the meowing cat with a wide open ashtray for a mouth. The lamps were pure kitsch with polychromed ceramic couples from exotic lands, and always in pairs. These absurdities remain the icons of the period, while the design brilliance has been absorbed. The classic Eames lounge chair and ottoman from 1956 still epitomize refined taste.

50's Fashion

don't miss the fashion show , Sunday at 4:00

Adults, Moms and Dads, could attire themselves in the newest "casual" sportswear; the influx of longer periods of free time, and utilization of time-saving household devices created a market for specialized clothing, reflecting the new lifestyle of personal freedom, and the devil-may-care attitude that accompanied it. For Dad, the day's choice might be an iridescent red lounge-lizard jacket, with blue argyle shirt and patterned tie. Dressy, but relaxed. Mother could find her finishing touches, the lovely "Parisian" patterned vinyl handbag and good white gloves waiting on the dresser. Smart, snappy, and ready to go!

Meanwhile, the kids were busy dividing themselves into the two warring factions of the period, either clean-cut citizens of tomorrow or juvenile delinquents. For those goody-two-shoe boys, we had patterned two-tone gabardine jackets, often reversible. Underneath, how about a really keen red lurex spangle shirt (which was composed of a metal and natural thread combination, first seen covering chairs and couches more suitable for a rocketship than the living room. Could this be Body Upholstery?); and to top it off, a lively bow tie. Miss Prim'n'Proper teen queen might don her best pastel dish hat and smart plastic rhinestone bag for the afternoon outing. Very pert! On the other side of the tracks, for those "Ladies" of a more lawless disposition, we have a jungle of assorted leopard-skin prints, "naughty" undies, and prerequisite killer high heels. Just what no "nice" girl would think of wearing. For Bad Boys, sleazy rayon sports shirts of abstract print, and the Black Leather Jacket, a classic form of fashion rebellion from its very inception.

Although the choice of accessories, jewelry, watches, lighters, cigarette cases, etc., remained personal touches not everyone felt necessary, there was one iconographic element agreed on by all. Sunglasses, for the masses. No outfit was complete without them, and they came in a blinding and bewildering assortment of styles and statements. Americans took sunglasses seriously, as visible evidence of leisure time in abundance, and the RIGHT element to supply a sense of glamor and mystery to anyone. We were all Hollywood stars, and in most cases, for less than a dollar.

The Fifties offered to all, the modern solution to telling society Who one Really Was, by virtue of the shirt on one's back. New materials, easy-to-care-for fabrics, and the ever-increasing allowance of free time coupled with more money and more places to spend it, made dressing right more important than ever, but compensated for by being so E-Z! Even though the Fifties home was certainly an oasis of luxury living in a troubled world, with clothes like these it's a wonder anyone stayed home at all.

exerpted from Fifties Homestyle *by Mark Burns and Lois DiBonis*

Drama and Literature

Broadway took few risks during the '50s, banking heavily on big musicals of the kind that had set attendance records in the '40s. Typical of these was Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*, a corny family show about a con artist who tries to dupe a little Iowa town in 1912-but ends up as lovable as everyone else on the stage. Rodgers and Hammerstein, naturally, remained at the top of the field, scoring in 1951 with *The King and I*, in 1958 with *Flower Drum Song* and a year later with *Sound of Music*.

The biggest single hit of the decade was Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady*, a musical adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Set in Edwardian England, the plot revolved around the attempt of Henry Higgins, a professor of phonetics (Rex Harrison), to teach Eliza Doolittle, a cockney girl (Julie Andrews), how to speak like a lady. Higgins succeeded, but Harrison very nearly flopped before the first curtain went up. He had to learn to sing-a transformation that in real life, equalled Eliza's stage transformation.

Two other successful variations on the Broadway theme were *Bye, Bye Birdie*, which spoofed a rock and roll singer resembling Elvis Presley, and *West Side Story*. Both shows modeled their heroes on America's newly rebellious youth, but *Birdie* was pure froth, while *West Side Story* was a powerful retelling of the tragic tale of *Romeo and Juliet* in terms of rival teen-age slum gangs.

The one new stage development of the decade was the growth of off-Broadway productions. The $250,000-plus cost of putting on a Broadway show and scalper prices up to $50 for orchestra seats triggered a migration downtown to low-cost houses in Greenwich Village. In 1954 the *Three-Penny Opera* opened there with an eyedropper budget of $9,000 and tickets scaled down as low as $1.75. Its dramatic excellence spurred an enormously successful rush of hole-in-the-wall productions, and, by 1956, off-Broadway was offering 68 shows to adventurous theatergoers.

Although some book publishers gloomily predicted at the beginning of the '50s that TV would blow them right out of business, they were astonished to find, at decade's end, that they had sold 53 per cent more books than in the previous 10 years. And the chairman of the board of Simon & Schuster actually thanked TV for this boom: people stayed home to watch their favorite shows, he explained, and when the show was over, it was "too late to go out and too early to go to bed." So they read books.

To meet this new demand, publishers began producing huge stocks of cheap paperbacks, using machinery adapted from the magazine industry to print 12,000 soft-cover volumes an hours. Some were priced as low as 25 cents and by 1958, the astonishing total of 350 million books were sold in one year. Atop this wave, raking in royalties of as much as $56,000 a year, were sensationalists like Grace Metalious, author of *Peyton Place*, a novel about life in a New England Gomorrah, and a tough-talking Brooklyn writer named Frank Morrison (Mickey) Spillane. Spillane's detective hero Mike Hammer left in his wake after six books more than 45 corpses and countless beautiful, ravaged babes. Mystery fans devoured 27 million copies of Spillane's alleged trash.

exerpted from This Fabulous Century, *Vol VI, Time Life Books, 1970*

Television: Hypnotizing Children and Adults

Television impacted American culture in the 1950's like a tidal wave, bringing the greatest and most immediate change in the history of communication.

The young days of television as a mass medium, from the late forties to the early fifties, have been called the "Golden Age of Television" There existed a balance in programming that made room for opera, serious drama, wrestling and boxing, documentaries, musical variety shows, news, adventure series and situation comedies. Most programs were broadcast live, which made them sometimes clumsy, but exciting.

Television was a domestic presence far more intrusive than radio had ever been. The flickering screen demanded our attention, and so we stayed in more. Attendance to movies and theaters dropped as television, cheaper and easier than a night on the town, drew us in.

The popularity of television seemed to prove that America had become a class-less, but middle-class, society. It was the electronic melting pot. The movies had made images larger than life, television grabbed images of everything from food and fads to wars and assassinations. The world was shrunk into a small, neat, digestible package. By 1959, the average American family was sitting before the box six hours a day, seven days a week. From that time until the present, a show's ratings, not its quality, determined the programming.

American children, hypnotized by the magic box, came to worship at the electronic altar, where the infant entertainment industry decreed that Saturday mornings would be the time to pay proper respect. Thus, children's programming was born, producing one of the first really popular children's shows, Howdy Doody. Howdy was a wooden marionette of a rather androgynous nature (although it wore a cowboy outfit), and was partnered on the screen by a human called Buffalo Bob. The immense success of this program was followed quickly by other series using/imitating the adult-child "sidekick" format. This "child-as-minature-adult" idea reinforced the

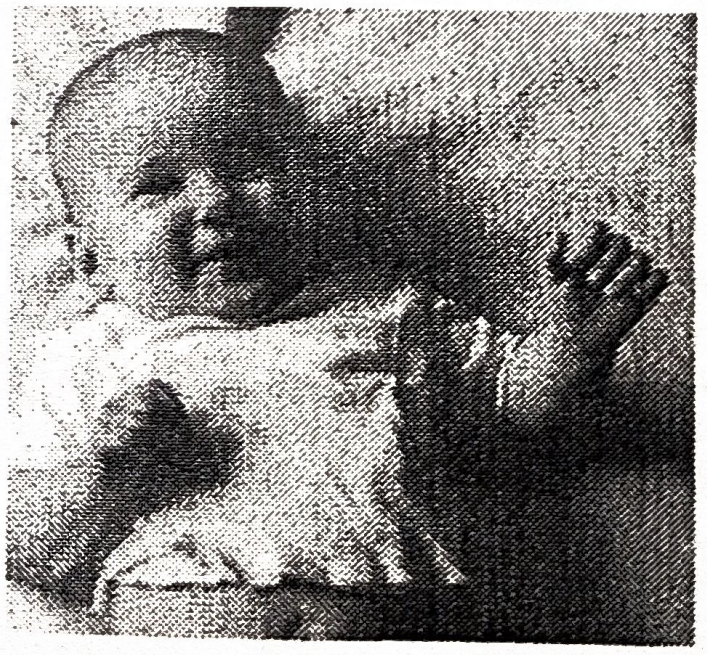
viewer's duties and responsibilities as well as stressing the all-important family unit.

What kid could resist (or forget?) the adventures of Superman and Jimmy Olsen, Sky King and his niece Penny, Annie Oakley and Tagg, or even Wonder Dog Rin Tin Tin and his aide-de-camp Rusty? There were heroes and heroines enough for all, both boys and girls! For those few hours once a week, we were invincible. And to remind us the rest of the week, we carried lunch boxes to school emblazoned with those self-same heroes.

The glamor of TV touched everyone. And, since everything was advertising and consumer led, the adults were soon enjoying the delights of TV Christianity (One of the early major clerics of the tube was Bishop Sheen). But more secular delights prospered, especially the drag acts of the variety performer Milton Berle. And although radio drama was still important in the early Fifties-romantic serials such as "The Shadows" were popular-once radio gave way to TV, the soap opera was begotten. As everyone knows, these programs were vehicles for the washing powder ads aimed directly at the housewife.

The Fifties were ambivalent about sexual licence; they were obsessed by the subject; new diversions such as the 29 cent 45 r.p.m. discs and Elvis Presley and rock'n'roll were seen by the young as delightful, but by some of the elders as taboo. TV cameras, for example, were not at first permitted to show Elvis from anything other than the waist up-those gyrations of his were too much to bring into the parlor.

Reading did not disappear, despite the predictions of school teahers. Children devoured adventure books-oriented by sex, of course. The boys read "The Hardy Boys" and the girls identified with a heroine called Nancy Drew-she was always getting into scrapes. Housewives read magazines and wrote letters to them; and some of them certainly felt that the American



exerpted from Fifties Homestyle, *by Mark Burns and Lois DiBonis and from* This Fabulous Century, *volume VI, Time Life Books*

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

The 1950's was a technologically dynamic decade. The years directly following World War II became, without a doubt, an era of incredible scientific achievements and accomplishments. The infancy of the Atomic age proved both an asset and a deficit as many technological strides were made in the area of nuclear power. However, this was always offset by the fear of the awesome, destructive power of such a tool.

The fifties became the decade of television, perhaps the greatest media invention of all time. This TV generation was looking to technology to attain the "good life" in suburbia. the 1950's produced a home appliance heaven for any housewife searching for the cutting edge of convenience. Home life in the fifties was also enhanced by the success of the automobile as the vast United States was spanned by a great network of interstate highways. The prosperity of America created an atmosphere where inventions of leisure were financially sound and realistic and the television, radio, telephone, appliance, automobile, and other industries flourished due to the new direction of consumer demands.

On another front, medicine was expanding by great leaps and bounds. Pharmaceutical developments brought many new drugs into the popular mainstream on the fifties including antibiotics and tranquilizers. On even greater horizons, Dr. Jonas Salk discovered an effective Polio vaccine in 1955 which, in a manner of years, destroyed a much feared medical condition. Also, in 1953, an American scientist, James D. Watson and an English associate, Francis Crick, uncovered the chemical foundations of life in the form of DNA (deoyribonucleic acid).

The scientific field which truly personified the mood of the 1950's was found in the aeronautics and space industry. Fitting with the Cold War mentality, the space race became a competitive arena for the Soviet Union and the United States. Although the Soviet Union took an early lead in space by its launch of Sputnik in 1957, the efforts of the United States space program in the late fifties early sixties brought America the greatest of victories by reaching the moon in 1969.

America in the 1950's was defining and redefining scientific and technological mediums at a breakneck pace. From automation to medicine, from space to the kitchen, from television to nuclear power, the United States produced a level of ingenuity and genius which may never be surpassed.

written by Chris Lyons

The Bomb and the Cold War

In 1949 the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb. An Air Force B-29 bomber, measuring cosmic rays in the upper atmosphere reported its discovery to President Harry S. Truman. It was three weeks before the public was informed. Panic seized the country. All the horrors of Hiroshima seemed to be coming home! Ten to fifteen million Americans a day could be killed if the Russians decided to blast U.S. cities with A-bombs.

Still, no one knew quite what to do. One solution, nearly as frightening as the problem itself, was to push foward the development of a superbomb, an apocalyptic weapon that would fuse together atoms of hydrogen, the element that fuels the sun. It was possible, in theory, to build an H-bomb a thousand times more potent than the Hiroshima weapon. Most scientists were vehemently opposed. J. Robert Oppenheimer along with eight of the Atomic Energy Commission's nine-man panel of scientific advisors urged President Truman to shelve all plans for the H-bomb. The commission fired Oppenheimer as a consultant on June 29, 1954.

The H-bomb was born of fear of communism, fear of Russia's superior armies, fear perhaps of the responsibilities of world leadership, fear that the Russians might get the superbomb first.

A British physicist, Dr. Klaus Fuchs, who had worked on the A-bomb at Los Alamos, confessed that from 1942 to 1949 he had fed atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. This persuaded Truman that work on the H-bomb was a necessary evil. Technological possibility confronted ethical imperitives and triumphed.

On June 25, 1950 the nation's concern about Communist aggression was vindicated by a massive invasion force from North Korea which poured into South Korea. Within a month Red troops occupied most of the peninsula. For the second time in five years, the United States was at war. Air-raid drills became routine once again and children learned to "duck-and-cover" under their school desks. Private citizens began building their own bomb shelters and stocking them with everything from Geiger counters and guns to canned goods and bibles.

The hydrogen bomb was developed and tested on November 1, 1952 by Edward Teller. It was awesome! Now major cities could be melted down in a single blast. American citizens went into denial. The graveyard humorist, Tom Lehrer expressed the nation's resignation:

"And we will all go together when we go,
Every Hoffentott and every Eskimo;
When the air becomes uranious,
We will go simultaneous,
Yes, we will all go together when we go."

Suburbia- tract housing and the automobile

The culture of suburbia was not invented in the 1950's. The yearning for a private home with a plot of land around it was a long standing American dream. Until the 1920's, it was a dream realized only by the wealthy. The Depression and World War II had interrupted the spread of suburban growth. On July 3, 1950, William J. Levitt was pictured on the cover of Time magazine with this caption. "House Builder Levitt: For Sale; a new way of life." He called his firm Levitt and Sons, "the General Motors of the Housing Industry." Mass production techniques brought uniform houses to the eager middle class. In 1950 1.4 million new housing units were constructed. Between 1950 and 1960 about 1.5 million persons moved to the suburbs from New York City alone. This was reflected across the United States. The process of suburbanizing the middle class was aided greatly by government policy. Through the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration, the government helped millions of Americans to purchase new single family homes by guaranteeing the mortgages made by banks, building and loan associations and insurance companies. Loan policies made it virtually impossible to obtain funds for buying and restoring older, urban properties.

Life in most suburbs in the fifties mirrored the corporate ideal of human individualism submerged in mass market uniformity. With small lots, picture windows, thin walls, no fences and few trees, privacy was minimal. Conformity was tacitly enforced.

Most of the new suburban homes were inhabited by young married couples, between the ages of 25 and 35, usually with one child and a second on the way. Incomes averaged between $6,000 and $7,000 per year. Though many of these suburbanites were new middle class, the communities were very middle class/one class communities. Singles, childless couples, homosexuals, extended families, old people, the rich and the poor, and especially non-whites, were not welcomed. Most of the new suburbanites Said that they had left the city in search of clean air, space, green, growing things to look at and good schools. They usually got these things, but many had a more elusive goal that they did not discuss as freely: higher social status. Young husbands hoped for influential neighbors who might help them in their careers. Young wives dreamed of entertainment in more sophisticated homes than they had known. To an extent, these hopes came true. Status is self conferrable. Cheerfully, the new suburbs conferred it upon themselves.

The typical new suburb started from scratch on vacant land sold to subdividers, and its new inhabitants hardly knew how to begin. Carefully they tended their grounds to win neighbors' approval and held back yard bar-b-ques to cement chance acquaintanceships. They set up branches of national institutions-the Girl Scouts, the Little League, the P.T.A., the Cub Scouts- and sent their children to music and dancing

classes. Cocktail parties grew into cocktail circuits, and though they were often derided, to be invited was a mark of social acceptance.

Suburbia depended upon the automobile. Cars made suburban escape possible. In 1950 a record of more than eight million cars and trucks were manufactured. Throughout the decade, auto sales seldom fell below seven million annually. By 1958 over 67 million vehicles were in use and 12 million suburban families had two or more cars. By 1960 the census reported that 65% of the working population drove to work. American had entered the Age of the Automobile.

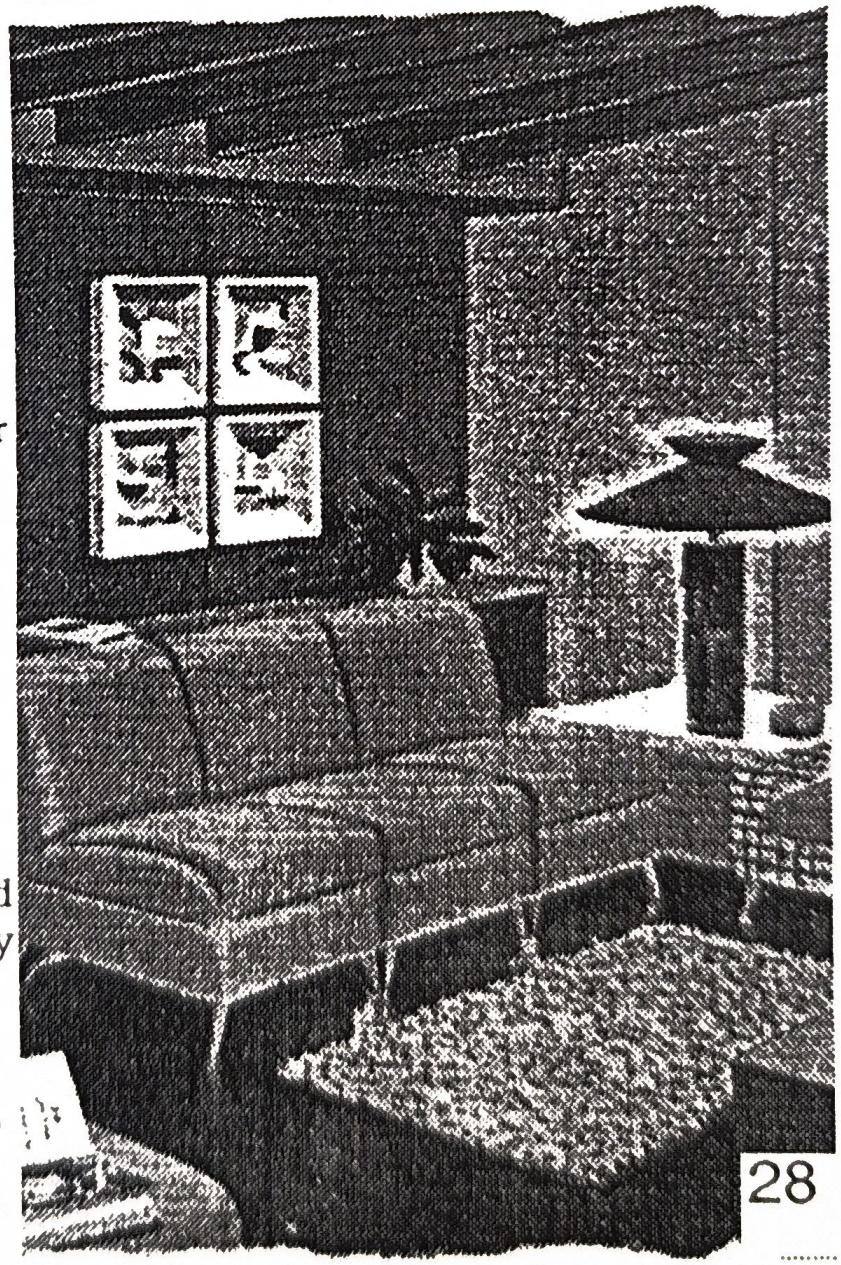
The smooth lines and solid, conservative colors of cars in the 1940's gave way to soaring tail fins, incredible horsepower, and rocket engines in colors like "Passion Pink" and green, or two tone "Campus Cream and Maroon." Cars brought status, the ultimate symbol of American baroque being the Cadillac.

The Automobile industry became the world's most powerful lobby. The steel, rubber, petroleum and construction industries all grew rich and dependent on cars. Style triumphed over safety. Fashion won, hands down, over function.

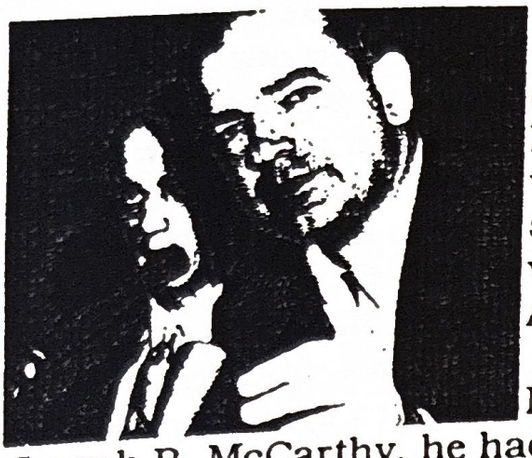
It was not until 1954 that Cornell University, in response to rising highway deaths, published research proving conclusively that seats belts saved lives. Nobody listened. In 1957, Ralph Nader began his investigation of auto safety while still a Harvard law student. Again, safety was ignored. When an automobile became involved in a accident the automatic assumption was that the driver was at fault.

The power of the Auto Lobby triumphed with the passing of the National Defense Highway Act in 1956. This authorized the construction of 40,000 miles of new high-speed, limited access roadways to be constructed at the cost of $41 billion. A hidden cost of this decision by the Eisenhower administration was that other forms of transportation were allowed to lapse.

By the end of the decade, all parts of the nation had vast suburban belts. Super highways spawned more and more housing developments, shopping malls, motels, filling stations, fast food restaurants and a glut of gawdy commercial strips that effectively abandoned the culture centers and left the cities to those either too rich to want to leave, or too poor to be able to escape.



MCCARTHYISM



For 36 days in 1954, a struggle for power raged in Washington. Technically, it was just a Senate subcommittee hearing on a dispuit between Republican Senator Joseph R. McCarthy and the U.S. Army,but at stake was the integrity of the American political system. As the two sides set upon each other with charges and countercharges, 20 million Americans watched on television.

When, on the 30th day of the Army-McCarthy hearings, the end came for Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, he had just finished another harangue. His black-stubbled jowls were spread in the familiar wolfish grin as he awaited the usual tribute of applause. Instead the people-his people-who were jammed against the marble columns and crimson curtains of the Senate Caucus Room, applauded his enemy, another Joe named Welch. McCarthy seemed puzzled and suddenly alone. He held his palms up in bafflement and said: "What did I do?"

He had done nothing different, really, from what he had been doing for the past 1,700 days. During that time, the Wisconsin Republican turned Washington upside down. He had set up a retinue of civil-servant informants, exercised a virtual veto over State Department personnel and U.S. foreign policy, demoralized the Voice of America, driven from Washington four Senators who opposed his methods, charged two Presidents with treason, wrung sobs from the Secretary of the Army and added his name to the language as a symbol of persecution. All told, McCarthy had probably come as close to wrecking the U.S. political system as had any man in the previous century.

The era of McCarthysim began the night of February 9, 1950, in the old McLure Hotel in Wheeling, West Virginia, where the Senator had flown to address the local Republican Lincoln Day dinner. In the four and a half previous years-since the end of World War II-Communism had changed from ally to menace; and the United States, an essentially insular nation, had suddenly been thrust into leadership of a complex, contentious world. Nothing seemed to go right for the new leaders. Communists had taken over Czechoslovakia and Hungary and had conquered China; they had exploded an A-bomb and encircled West Berlin with a blockade. Americans were angry and bewildered. What had gone wrong? Had the U.S. been sold out? There were those who thought so. "Traitors in the high councils in our own government," said an ambitious California congressman named Richard Nixon, "have made sure that the deck is stacked on the Soviet side."

The House Un-American Activities Committee began to seek out the traitors. To the astonishment of some Americans and the dismay of all, it found some. A number of government employees who were Communists or Communist sympathizers apparently had fed highly confidential information to the Russians. Several of them were convicted of various crimes in the aftermath of the committee hearings-notably a one-time State Department official named Alger Hiss. There were not many such cases. But there were enough to lend a semblance of reasonableness to the growing Red scare.

It was at this moment that Joseph McCarthy stepped forward,

claiming he had the names of live Reds, busy undermining the government right now. Holding aloft a document, he told his West Virginia audience: "I have here in my hand a list of 205 "security risks;" the day after, in Salt Lake City, the 205 security risks changed to "57 card-carrying Communists"; 10 days later in the Senate the 57 Communists became "81 cases."

The fact was that there were no names at all. What McCarthy held in his hand that night was a three-year old letter from former Secretary of State James Byrnes; it informed a Congressman that permanent tenure for 205 unnamed State employees might be denied on various grounds, including drunkeness. Six months after the Wheeling speech, a hastily convened Senate subcommittee concluded that the Senator had perpetrated a "fraud and a hoax." But no one was listening; an anxious nation was launched on a four-year binge of hysteria and character assassination. Americans needed to lay blame and Joseph McCarthy had offered them some simple, understandable targets.

In a later speech McCarthy conjured up more frightening arithmetic: "We've been losing to international Communism at the rate of 100 million people a year." Then, ominously: "Perhaps we should examine the background of the men who have done the planning, and let the American people decide whether. . .we've lost because of stumbling, fumbling idiocy, or because they planned it that way."

Millions of Americans listened as McCarthy, under protection of Senatorial immunity, then began naming names. He called Secretary of State Dean Acheson "The Red Dean." He described Far East expert Owen Lattimore as the "top Russian espionage agent in the U.S." and charged that U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Philip Jessup was "preaching the Communist Party line." Besides name-calling McCarthy quickly proved that he could break people. Millard Tydings, a conservative Maryland Democrat who had chaired the 1950 Senate subcommittee that branded McCarthy's Wheeling charges a "hoax", ran for reelection later that year. McCarthy was waiting. He had a composite photograph put together purporting to show Tydings talking amiably with former U.S. Communist chief Earl Browder, saturated Maryland with copies and was widely credited with defeating the Senator's bid for a sure fifth term. He also took the scalps of other Senators who got in his way, among them Senate Democratic floor leader Scott Lucas of Illinois, Ernest MacFarland of Arizona and William Benton and Raymond Baldwin of Connecticut. He accused the Voice of America of deliberately constructing two radio transmitters where they would be ineffective; M.I.T. and RCA experts later disproved McCarthy but by then one engineer who had been involved had committed suicide. McCarthy encouraged fanatical anti-Communist government workers to leak confidential documents to him and grinned that he commanded a "Loyal American Underground."

This was McCarthyism, the exploitation of a nation's fears, a brutal attack on Americans with divergent views, and it became an overriding fact of American life. Although in four years McCarthy was unable to offer legal support for a single charge, nevertheless people were stampeded. "McCarthy may have something," said Massachusetts Congressman John F. Kennedy. Truman's Attorney General, J. Howard McGrath, in 1952 ordered six detention camps readied to incarcerate alleged spies and saboteurs.

exerpted from This Fabulous Century

Sports

The Golden Age is Now

- Yogi Berra
- Bob Cousy
- Don Larsen
- Rocky Marciano
- Casey Stengel
- Ben Hogan
- Sugar Ray Robinson
- Arnold Palmer
- Jonny Unitas
- Stan Musial
- Jim Brown
- Ted Williams
- Willie Mays
- Sam Snead
- Jackie Robinson
- Paul Horning
- Mickey Mantel
- Wilt Chamberlain
- Joe DiMaggio•

A symbolic reflection of the era, sports in the 1950's embodied the attitudes and personality of a nation, celebrating its greatness and good fortune. In fact, the premiere of *Sports Illustrated* proclaimed that the "golden age is now" for sports in America. Increased leisure time and prosperity allowed for both the professional and amateur sports to flourish like never before. Participant sports in the 50's like fishing, bowling, hinting, boating, golfing and others attracted millions of Americans and enthralled the nation as a whole.

Professional sports were also supported well during the post war years. In the decade of the fifties, legends were born and heros were celebrated. Racial barriers were broken in difficult transitions by baseball's Jackie Robinson and Willie Mays, tennis' Althea Gibson, and boxing stars Floyd Patterson and Sugar Ray Robinson.

The names of the heroes of fifties sports make an endless list that echos the great expections of American society. A generation venerated and admired the athletes as the best ever. As humankind accomplished the impossible in science, athletes accomplished the impossible in human bodies-Roger Bannister ran a mile in under four minutes in 1954, and Sir Edmund Hillary climbed to the top of the world, standing at the summit of Mt. Everest in 1953. They were the epitome of the age.

written by Chris Lyons

Religion

Between 1949 and 1953 the yearly distribution of Bibles rose 140%. Ten million Bibles were sold in 1953. While contributions to religious causes reached a record $3.4 billion by 1957 and there was a boom in new church building, including drive-in churches.

Religion as a mass media phenomena continued into the fifties with movies such as The Robe and The Ten Commandments dramatizing Christianity for the masses and enjoying enormous box office success.

The leading popularizers of religion were the Reverend Billy Graham, the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale and Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. The each had their own television and radio shows.

On the literary front, Fulton Oursler rewrote the Bible in digest form. In 1953 booksellers reported one out of every ten books sold was religious. Second only to the Bible in book sales from 1952 to 1955 was Norman Vincent Peale's The Power of Positive Thinking.

Patriotism and religion seemed synonymous in the 50's:

- A 1954 survey indicated that a majority of Americans (60 percent) would not permit a book by an atheist to remain in a public library.
- 84 percent believed that atheists should be excluded from teaching in colleges or universities.
- 89 percent would keep them out of higher education altogether.
- A Gallup poll in 1958 revealed that four out of five Americans would refuse to vote for and atheist presidential candidate under any circumstances.

Native Americans

While in many ways the 1950's was a time of great prosperity for the majority of American people, one segment of society, that of the Native Americans, continued to be victimized by their oppressive past. The turbulent years following World War II were filled with drastic changes for the American Indian and his relationship to the government of the United States. Early in the decade and carried further by the Eisenhower administrations, many policy makers sought to discontinue the costly "paternal" relationship between the U.S. government and Indian tribes. Hoping to assimilate the Native American population into the symbolic "melting pot", the United States government attempted to "get out of the Indian business" and encourage more Native Americans to enter the mainstream of society.

This policy plan was carried out in two different programs, termination and relocation. The termination policy primarily tried to lessen tribal economic dependency upon the federal government, to the point of doing away with the entire reservation system over time. This policy approach was coupled with a second program which attempted to bring volunteers off of the desolate and economically depressed reservations and train them in major metropolitan areas. Both of these policies seemed to reaffirm a desire to absorb American Indians into the norm of society. Although the basic goals of the Native American policies appear good-natured, the approach was often abused in order to confiscate Indian lands or resources. Hundreds of cases were settled in an effort to carry through all aspects of the termination policy, but many reservations still exist today., Over 100,000 Native Americans were relocated between 1952-1970, but a total success could not be proclaimed. In the first eight years of the relocation program, over 30% of the American Indians who participated returned to the reservations.

Even with the best of intentions, things often go amiss. Many Native American groups saw these programs as attacks on the ancient heritage and culture of the Indian peoples. Because of the drastic shock of moving from the reservations and dealing with the dominant culture on a much greater scale, many Native Americans both in the cities and on reservations found refuge in numbers. A great unification of all different types of tribes and peoples can be seen as a result of some of the policies of the fifties. Urban Indians formed Native American centers to seek peace and provide comfort for American Indians who had been separated from their traditions.

written by Chris Lyons

Festival Consultants

Timothy Scheurer is a Professor of Humanities at Franklin University where he teaches courses in American Literature, Popular Culture, American Popular Music and the Humanities.

He has edited a two-volume collection of essays entitled, *American Popular Music, Reading from the Popular Press* and his book *Born in the U.S.A.: The Myth of America in Popular Music from Colonial Times to the Present* was published by the University Press of Mississippi in Spring 1991. He has also published articles on popular music, Vietnam and popular culture, the TV variety program and the movie musical. He is a member of the advisory board for *The Journal of Popular Film and Television*.

He received his Ph.D from Bowling Green State University in 1976, his M.A. is from Mankato State University Minnesota and his B.A. is from St. Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota.

Georgia Tangi is a Professor of Art at Franklin University and Special Programs Coordinator at the Cultural Arts Center. Georgia has written much of the text for this booklet. She recently completed a one-woman exhibition of her paintings and pastel drawings called Pictura, Poesis, Persona. She received her Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 1981 with an interdisciplinary focus on the liberal arts. She holds a M.F.A. in Painting from the Kansas City Art Institute and has received numerous awards for her art, including a Mid-America Biennial Purchase Award and Kentucky Painter Award from the Guggenheim Museum. Her paintings have traveled in exhibitions throughout the Midwest.

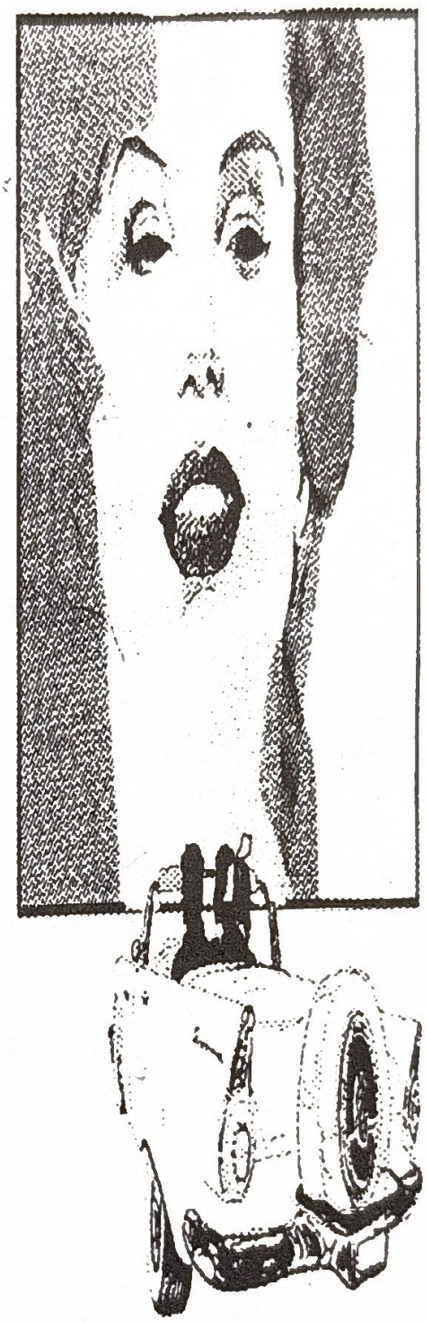
The Cultural Arts Center wishes to thank our generous supporters:

Columbus
Recreation & Parks
Department

Funded Through
Ohio Arts Council

727 East Main Street
Columbus, Ohio 43205-1796
(614) 466-2613

OHIO
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL



Thank you for celebrating the 1950's with us!